Mr. Stephen S. Rosenfeld
The Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20071

12/27/91

Dear Mr. Rosenfeld,

Thanks to you and the Post for a generally excellent commentary on more than Oliver Stone's crude commercialization and exploitation of the JFK assassination in his attempted rewriting of it to suit his preconceptions.

I explain why this will be rough and perhaps disorganized. It is the strange life that for medical reasons I live and the fact that enfeebled at 78 I have undertaken another rather large job now that responsible book-writing is impossible for me, of trying to keep the historical record straight. With an able and unscrupulous monster like Stone this had meant much work with many interruptions.

A major part of this has been defending the Post and George Lardner from an assault of libels from Stone and his sycophants to publications where there is little prospect of publication. This does, however, leave part of the historical record phonied up corrected. Of course, I am also responsible for his indecent assault contrived to at the same time promote Stone and his movie, because I got it all started through George.

George's stories were entirely accurate and more than fair.

If the Post had not been late this morning, a rarity, I'd be certain of being able to get this in Frederick's one outgoing mail this evening. I'll try in part because I anticipate that Stone or one of his hired-hands or syoophants may attack immediately. The paper was not here until I returned from my early-morning walking therapy and soon I must leave for an hour and a half of physical therapy. I am also a small publisher and do not dare let orders accumulate because that makes problems that both wastd time and present other difficulties to me.

If you have any question at all about what I say, please as, George. We have known each other for 25 years. I think he will tell you that he knows of no inaccuracy of any consequence in any of my six JFK assassination books or in anything I have told him for any or many stories; that I am alone among those ~~us~~ of us generally lumped together as "critics" or "buffs" who began with an apporpriate professional background, who has and advances no conspiracy theories and who to the best of my now limitdd abilility undertake to debunk all of them because there exists no factual basis for any of them.

The crime itself was ~~onevr~~ never intended to be investigated and wasn't. I believe George has ample documentation and I can provide a few illustrations if desired.

This means that there are no leads from the official noninvestigation for private persons to follow and most in the field lack the knowledge and experience anyway.

A few things before I leave so I will not forget them.

Long before daylight the 24th I began a response to Stone's exceptionally long oped piece but was interrupted and could not finish it. It will be longer than the Post could use (I am not assuming it will) in part for the historical record and in part for the Post's information and perhaps response to new attacks on it.

Adding more misinformation and more confusion without giving the people any fact at all Stone has generated great subject-matter interest that, while it has no chances of going anywhere, has generated public discussion most of which has been on his terms. I think it will not subside for a while.

However, aside from the Post, I know of no paper with a reporter like George, who is far and away the best-informed reporter on the subject, and he has a good idea of what I have and can provide.

He also has copies of my correspondence with Stone. I warned him 2/8/91 that he would be a Mack Sennett producing a Keystone Kops with a Pink Panther in basing his movie on Garrison's "On the Trail of the Assassin"(the one trail Garrison never followed) because it is a fraud and a travesty. I offered all the information and documentation he might want. He never responded.

Stone lied and was otherwise incorrect in what the Post published 6/2 and I wrote him about the next day.

To that his "research coordinator" replied in a snotty letter that can be interpreted as initiation of a bribe. I could not find any other meaning or interpretation.

You are absolutely correct about the influence on young people expectable from this movie. It has been apparent in thousands of letters to me from them in which they reflect the same evil and misleading influence on them in particular from the flood of conspiracy-theory books. (The compendium of them, Jim Marrs' "Crosfire," is according to Stone his second source.) But what is even worse, somewhere in my files is Stone's statement that he is preparing I do not recall what for use in schools!

The man is sinister! He has known from the time he got my first letter that it simply is impossible to do anything with Garrison's dishonest self-justification that will not emerge itself dishonest.

I hope that (schools) can be exposed before it is too late.

As you use it the Commission was "impeccable." In fact had the nation not been overwhelmed by the tragedy LBJ's brilliance in what he did could have caused questions. My own belief is that he wanted to quiet everything down. Whatever his motive he did what I think is unprecedented: he appointed a 5-2 majority of the minority party. The two Democrats were not JFK people. No former CIA head should have been considered. Russell told Johnson bluntly, or at least he so told me and I believe him, that he would be too busy leading the anti-Civil Rights fight to spend any time on Commission work. Russell believed he had

convinced Johnson.

The Commission's "solution" is what I am gald you call it, a "theory" and no more. Neither the FBI nor the Secret Service agreed and to my last knowledge still adher to their also impossible "solution," that no shot missed. I filed an affidavit in one of the FOIA cases from the man who sustained a slight wound from it. It is on the recorded police broadcasts, was observed and reported by the police, and it is what caused Arlen Specter to invent the single-bullet theory, also impossible. (The FBI transcribed the police tapes and knew)

You compare the credibility of the Commission's with other theories and say "it may have proved its theory." It did not. It could not. What it published, its Report and the 26 volumes of evidence, the only official information available when I wrote my first book, completely destroy the Report and I regret to say the credibility of all associated with it. No single error in my book has been called to my attention after all these years. In this I include official references to it in the 250,000 page disclosed to me and in response to my FOIPA requests for all records on or about me.

The media did not have time to read and analyze the Report and it had even less time to master the 10,000,000-word appendix.

However, the Post itself pointed out the impossibility of the official solution in a 1966 Memorial Day article by Dick Harwood in his page-one report on Ed Epstein's unpublished book and mine, which Dan Kurzman had read carefully. In fact, Ben Bradlee sent him and Larry Stern to ask questions I was asked to prepare for them. I limited myself to a single page. While Larry reported to Ben, Dan told me that Howard Willens did not have a satisfactory answer to any one of those questions. Kurzman departed and Harwood, without enough time, took the story over.

In response to Stone's attacks the Post may want to remember that its questioning story had a banner head across the top of page 1.

That there was "more than a lone gunman" was apparent from the outset. The simplest proof is that the best shots in the world were not able to duplicate the shooting attributed to Oswald and the Commission assembled them at the Aberdeen Proving Grounds to try.

I do not know what you mean when you say that Stone's massive conspiracy theory "plugs a gap." It may perhaps to the uninformed and as a theory only but in fact it has nothing at all. Period. Do not take time to tell me. My only purpose is to inform you and the Post.

I think it is self-defeating to respond in Stone's terms to his version of the Viet question. I made no reference to it in writing him. The NSAM on which he bases his theory was actually prepared by the JFK administration, just before the assassination. LBJ signed it, as I unserstand it.

There is too much else available that is definitive, including on Garrison and his book.

When Stone can really be clobbered for the deliberate liar he is is his repeated falsehood that all government records remained suppressed until at least the year 2039. I believe he repeated this in some form in his Post article. It was never true. In the last minute he modified this.

At the same time, official behavior was wretchedly bad. But the Commission's records were made available at the Archives as they were processed, I believe beginning in 1965.

Before Garrison's book was published I alone had about a quarter of a million disclosed pages from my FOIA litigation and at least one friend got close to 100,000. All these, once forced free in FOIA litigation, are readily available in the agency reading rooms. Stone knew what I have and make available to all writers when he was uttering these movie- and self-promoting lies. It is in my 2/8/91 letter, or he knew before he started shooting.

Few self-important are such big targets for ridicule.

When Stone boasts of being helped by "respected researchers" he is really referring to mostly nuts. He had no real need of them. He wanted them for exploitation and he did exploit their names as he misrepresented their knowledge and reputations.

This is why he paid respected and established actors a reported $50,000 for little more than bit parts and you will find his trading on their names in what he wrote Ben Bradlee.

I believe that if the movie does less well than he expected he is capable of starting up another campaign to promote it. If he does he'll be looking for ~~drag~~ targets, victims. The bigger his target the more likely he is to get attention. And he does have a claque working hard and effectively for him.

I believe he never mentions my name save as in the 12/24 article is because he recognizes that perhaps his greatest vulnerability is that he asked nothing of me after my 2/8 letter and proceeded with his film knowing it was based on a "fraud and a travesty."

Again thanks and best wishes,

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg